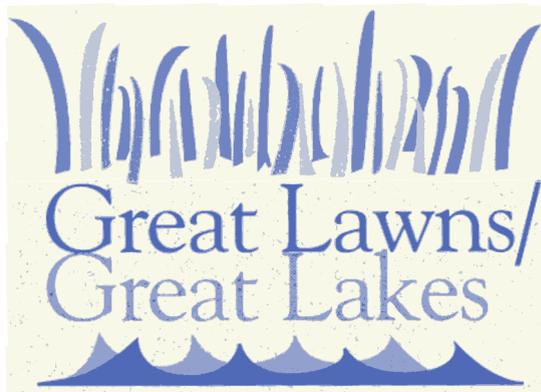


How
does
your
lawn
affect
Lake
Ontario?



How can I protect water quality?

...By protecting your watershed!

What is a watershed? A watershed is like a funnel that collects runoff from surrounding areas and drains into a lake. Nearly everything that runs off yards in the watershed – grass clippings, fertilizers, pesticides, and soil – travels through the streets and storm sewers into a lake like Lake Ontario.

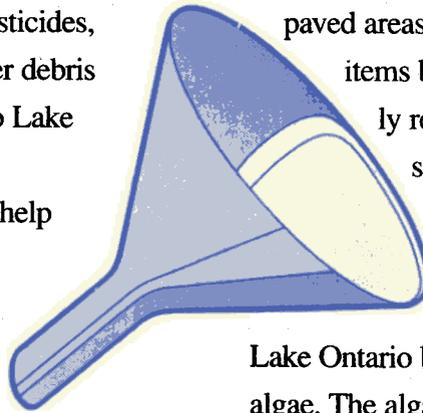
The Lake Ontario watershed extends for miles from the lakeshore. In fact, runoff from as far as the Pennsylvania/New York State border can make its way to the lake via the Genesee River. You don't have to live next to Lake Ontario or the Genesee River to affect their water quality.

From your yard... to the Street!

Intense rain or excessive irrigation creates runoff which may carry fertilizer, pesticides, soil, leaves, grass clippings, and other debris into streets and storm drains and into Lake Ontario.

Maintaining a healthy lawn will help prevent runoff. Here's how:

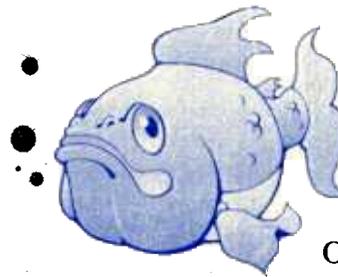
- Seed bare spots on your yard to prevent soil erosion.
- Point drain spouts away from foundations and paved surfaces and onto your yard.
- Before you apply fertilizers, take a soil test, and always read the label directions.
- Never pour leftover fertilizers and pesticides down storm drains. Instead, bring them to the Monroe County Household Hazardous Waste Facility for recycling or disposal. Call 760-7600 for an appointment.
- Use pesticides only after all other methods of pest control have failed.
- Keep leaves and grass clippings off paved surfaces. Nutrients from these organic materials damage Lake Ontario.
- Compost or mulch your leaves.
- Leave the grass clippings on your lawn as they provide beneficial nutrients.



From the street.... to Lake Ontario!

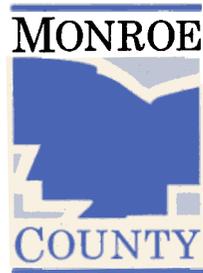
Because our neighborhoods have many paved areas, nature's ability to filter harmful items before they reach the lake is greatly reduced. Streets, driveways and sidewalks provide a direct route to Lake Ontario via storm drains and pipes.

Nutrients in runoff harm Lake Ontario by promoting growth of excessive algae. The algae form a scum on the water's surface that creates an unpleasant odor. But more importantly, the scum suffocates the lake. Aquatic plants don't get the sunlight they need and fish don't get the oxygen they need to survive.



That's why it's important to remember that even if you don't live next to Lake Ontario, you live in a watershed. That means what you do can harm Lake Ontario. It also means that you can help the lake. A few simple measures in maintaining a healthy yard will ensure a healthy Lake Ontario.

Lawn Care
Products
may be
transported
by storm
sewers and
runoff to
Lake
Ontario....



Monroe County
Department of Health
Andrew Doniger, MD, MPH
Director
Jack Doyle
County Executive

Cornell
Cooperative
Extension

The Great Lawns/Great Lakes Program is sponsored by the Monroe County Health Department and the Monroe County Cornell Cooperative Extension. For additional information, please contact the Program Coordinator at 461-1000. Written portions of this pamphlet have been reproduced courtesy of the Lake Harriett Project, Minnesota.
